

SUBURBAN LIFE

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THE SCENE



GRETCHEN HITCH

Greek travelers recall their trip

Gretchen Hitch's column *The Scene* alternates with Denise Lucas' column *Social Eyes*. To leave a message for Hitch, from a touch-tone phone, call 953-2047, Ext. 1885. Material for *The Scene* may be mailed to Hitch at 645 Kimberly, Birmingham 48009, or you may call her at 640-5277.

The large group from our area that traveled to Greece for the Susie Vestevich-Patrick Crocker wedding cannot forget its Greek Odyssey and continues to plan parties to exchange photos and reminisce how once-in-a-lifetime the experience was.

To walk where the dawn of civilization as we know it all began in 500 B.C., or in Crete 3,000 years ago, is almost a mystical experience — not to mention the bonding of a group of people thrown together for 12 or 16 days.

Attorney Boris Vaidoff started the rounds of reliving the trip with an informal dinner at the Birmingham home before Thanksgiving. The charming host invited the bride and groom, Susie and Patrick Crocker, and the parents of the bride, Peter and Anne Vestevich, as well as Betty Andreao, Jacqui Andreao and Terry Crawford.

Jacqui shot 20 rolls of film on the 16-day trip, and that night presented the newlyweds with four two-sided posterboard collages.

Jacqui reciprocated by inviting the same group to her Bloomfield Hills home before Christmas and serving a Greek menu. Each guest found a Greek ornament at his or her place as a favor.

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A new horizon Senior women organize own club

Area women 55 and older who want a club of their own are about to have one, that will rival the Senior Men's Club, with a program including luncheon, speakers and special interest groups.

By ETHEL SIMMONS
STAFF WRITER

Area suburban-area women interested in forming a Senior Women's Club that would meet at The Community House in Birmingham?

Club planners got an affirmative answer when 250 women jammed the Community House recently for a Membership Tea.

Penny Kleene of Beverly Hills, who chairs the steering committee, told the assembled women, "I think we've demonstrated today that the interest is there." In praise of the steering committee, she declared, "In my 58 years, I've worked on a number of committees, but never have I had such an outstanding group." Kleene explained that whenever there was a job to do, "Someone always stepped forward."

Originally, the tea table had been set up at the far wall of the auditorium, but because of the huge turnout, the wall between the auditorium and a second room was opened. More chairs were set up in the extra room, and the tea table was moved back there.

Kleene apologized to the audience for the delay at the door, where prospective members signed in by filling out an Interest Questionnaire. "We had anticipated as much enthusiasm," she said.

Needs board approval

The new club isn't a "done deal." It still has to be approved by the Community House Board of Directors. A proposal will be submitted to the board Tuesday, but because of the overwhelming response by local women, the Senior Women's Club is most likely to become a reality, Kleene said.

Women who filled out questionnaires at the tea will have their names placed on the mailing list to receive applications. "Applications will be mailed out when we receive approval from the board," she said. "Then we will start to meet on a regular basis."

A nominating committee will be formed to make up a slate of officers. "It's going to be tremendously important this first year to have strong leadership," Kleene pointed out.

Membership in the Senior Women's Club is open to women age 55 and older. The club is expected to meet two Tuesdays a month, the same day women gather for The Community House bridge group. A 10:30 a.m. business meeting will be followed by luncheon and a speaker, or special interest groups. Then, women who enjoy bridge may stay to play with the bridge group. "Most of the bridge ladies want to join the club," Kleene said. Dues will be \$24 a year.

Although the club will meet at The Community House, membership will not be limited to Birmingham-area residents. During the tea, Franne Greenbaum, director of development at The Community House, told the Observer & Eccentric, "We want to make it as open as possible and

See WOMEN, 2C



JOHN STORME/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

At tea table: Rose Ricelli of Bloomfield Hills (left), Peggy Donahue of Birmingham and Alice Zoya of Birmingham are among the 250 women attending the event.

Rabbi becomes a therapist but the job stays the same

By ETHEL SIMMONS
STAFF WRITER

Richard Weiss of Farmington Hills has been a rabbi for 28 years, but two years ago he became a rabbi without a congregation when Temple Beth Jacob in Pontiac closed down.

For Weiss that proved to be no problem. Using the same skills he called upon as a rabbi in counseling members of his Reform Jewish congregation, he has switched over to offering individual, group and bereavement counseling for the general public. "Everybody says, 'This is a new career for you,' but it's merely a logical evolution of what I've been doing," he said.

After the temple closed, due to changing demographics — members of his congregation moved to other communities and nearby temples — Weiss completed a master's degree in social work last May at Wayne State University. He is now completing his certification as a couples and family therapist.

Weiss conducts his counseling sessions in a comfortable, small room of the home where he lives

with wife Susan (who manages the Metro News Bookstore in Bloomfield Township). Books and records fill shelves along one wall, and Weiss' many certificates and diplomas hang on the same wall.

When he's working, he sits in a rocking chair that has "historical significance," and the people he counsels sit on a sofa across from him. Explaining the chair's history, Weiss said, "In the rabbinates, I'd have meetings or appointments every night. I'd give my daughter her bottle on this rocker. Now, she's a grown woman."

Psychology buff

Becoming a therapist was a natural for Weiss, who pointed out, "Over the years, I read psychology the way most people read mysteries, for my own pleasure." He said he has attended hundreds of seminars and other sessions on psychology.

When introducing himself, he says, "Dick Weiss," but when asked about his title explains that he can be called either "Rabbi" or "Dr." "Some people who leave the rabbinates would not use the title

'rabbi,'" he said, but he still does because he continues to conduct religious ceremonies including weddings and funerals.

He has conducted weddings for Jewish couples and officiated with Christian clergy at interfaith weddings. Weiss even has married a couple who are not of the Jewish faith. "In Pontiac, we sponsored two Vietnamese kids to come to this country. When the teen-aged girl married a Vietnamese man she met here, she insisted I perform the ceremony," he said.

Weiss spends a minimum of six hours with each couple in premarital counseling. "We talk about goals, constructive forms of communication, financial planning and sexual aspects of marriage. If it's an interfaith marriage, we talk about difference in religious background, and for children, and specifics of the ceremony."

Weiss has conducted 1,200 funerals in his lifetime. "I don't just show up there. Instead of going into the little office they have for the rabbi, I sit with the family. I put my arms around them and

See RABBI, 2C



Helpful: Richard Weiss is a rabbi, but he is turning to an expanded career in couples and family therapy, from office in his home. He also enjoys giving talks on related subjects to community organizations.

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